



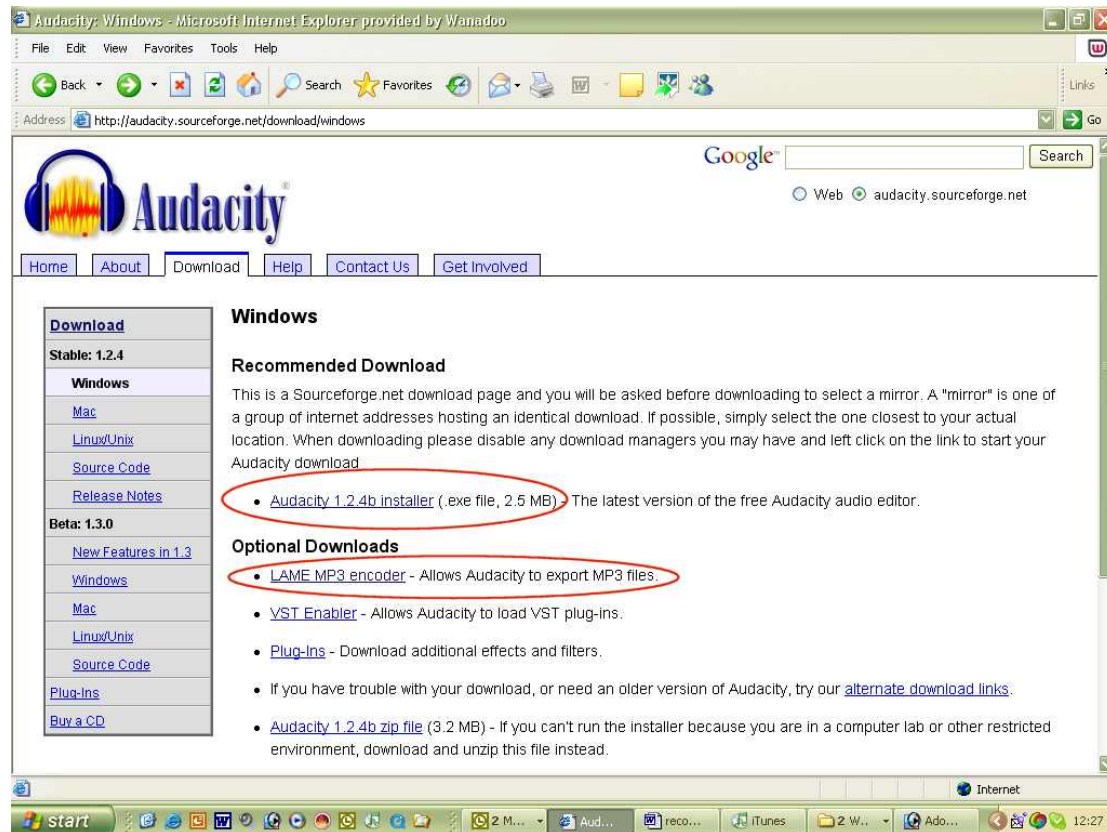
# AUDACITY : a getting started guide

This short guide will allow the reader to use the basic tools in Audacity. It is not intended to be a comprehensive manual. There are plenty of tutorials on the internet (some of which are listed at the end of this guide) and Audacity itself has very good build-in Help pages) but will be sufficient for getting started. Audacity is fairly intuitive for the competent Windows user and many facilities / features can be discovered through looking at the menu options.

*Alan Carr (August 2006)*

## Downloading & configuring Audacity

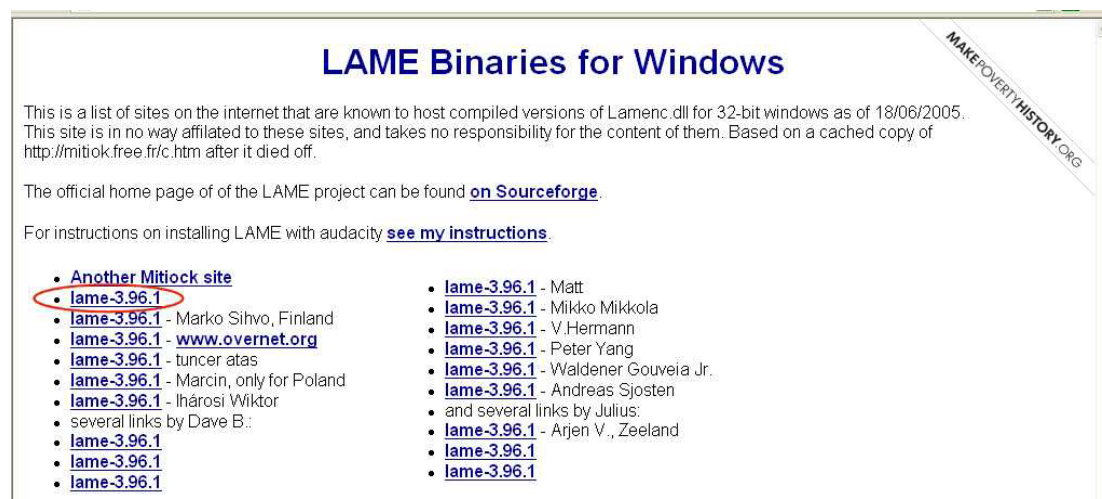
The software is FREE (open source) and can be downloaded from <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/download/windows>



Download the **Audacity installer** to your PC and then open it (double-click it) to begin the install procedure. If you follow the defaults it will install into a folder called Audacity in Program Files.

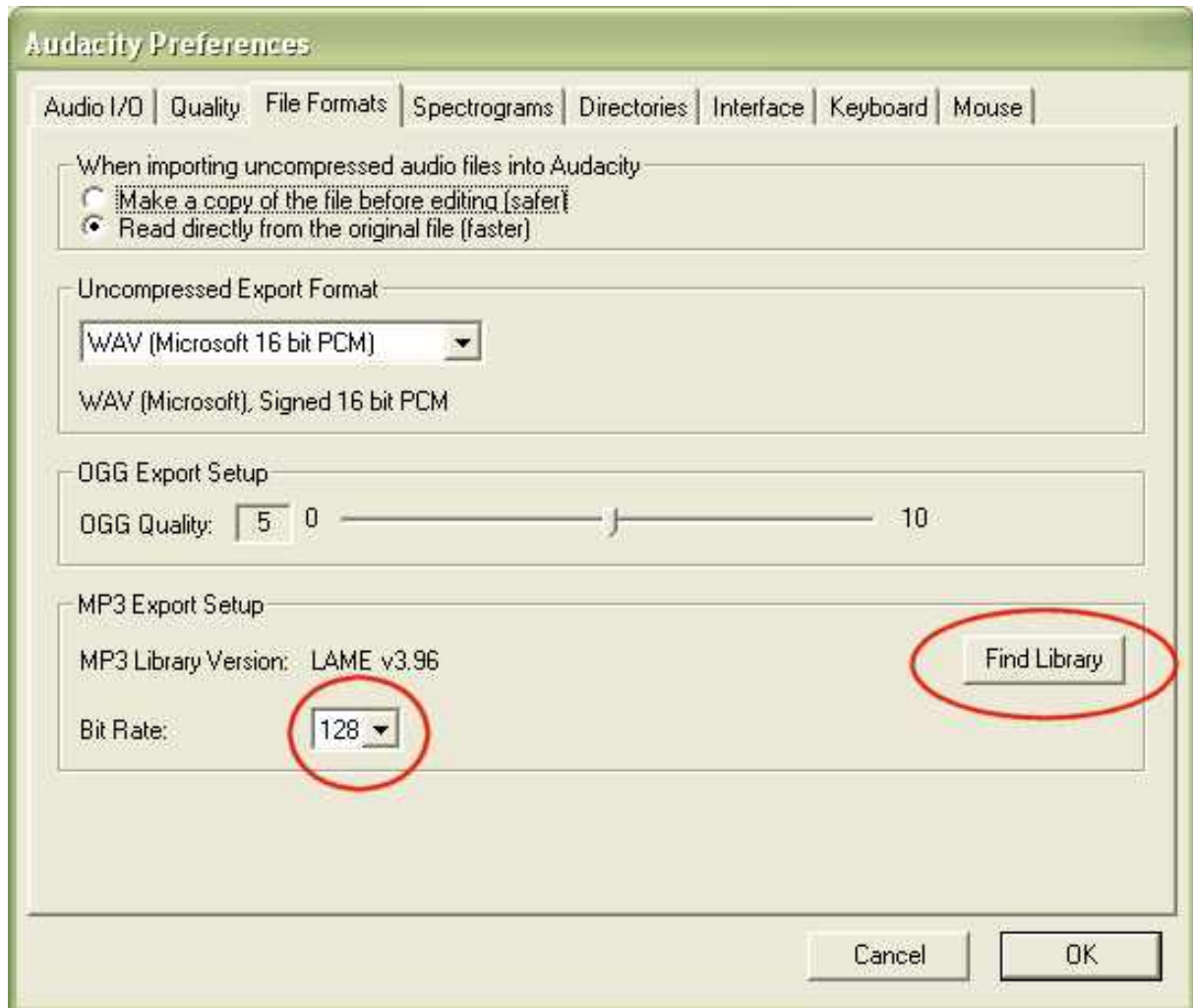
The next item to download is the LAME encoder. This is the add-on to Audacity that allows it to create mp3 files. The file can also be downloaded from <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/download/windows>

Click the **LAME MP3 encoder** link and download from any one of the listed sites - saving to an appropriate place - e.g. the Desktop.



You will find that you have downloaded a zip file. Unzip the file and copy a file called **lame\_enc.dll** into a suitable folder. (I suggest putting it into Program Files \ Audacity but it can go anywhere.)

Now open Audacity and tell it where to find the **lame-enc.dll** file - this is how.  
Choose **Edit / Preferences** from the menubar.  
Select the **File Formats** tab.



Click the **Find Library** button - it will ask you if you wish to locate the lame\_enc file.

Click **Yes**. Now navigate to the folder which contains the encoder and click **Open** to link it in to Audacity.

Before closing this configuration screen you can set the **Bit Rate** for your audio files (this selects the compression rate - affecting the quality and size of the compressed file).

If you are producing speech, I suggest using a bit rate of **64** which is radio quality. If you are using music then I suggest **128** (near CD quality). Other settings can be used, but I don't think it worth going above 128 for music as this produces large files with little or no discernable improvement in quality.

That's it - you've configured Audacity and can start the fun bit!



## Creating an audio file with Audacity

*The beauty of this audio editor is that it is simple to use - and many of the features are intuitive. It won't take long to master the basics and there is a very good built-in Help section. Here are some basic steps for getting started with Audacity - this is not a comprehensive tutorial. (You will find many tutorials on the internet - I mention a couple later.)*



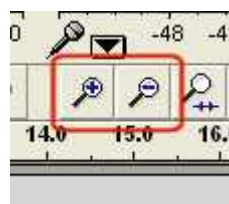
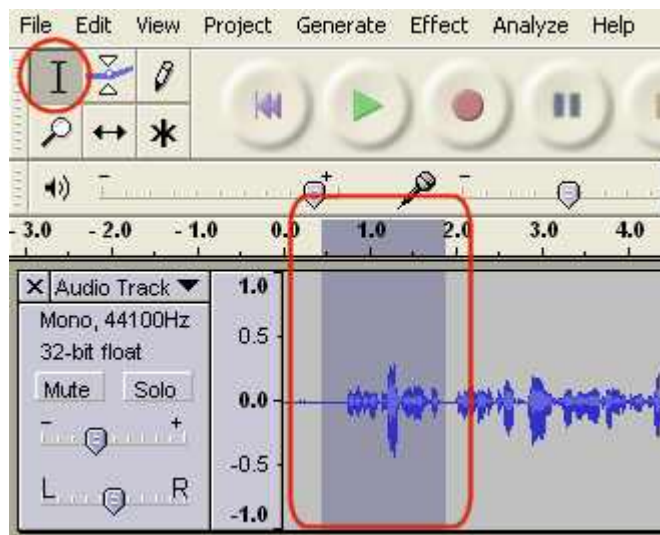
Open Audacity

Ensure that the input is set to **Microphone** (select from the drop down list)

Click the **red** record button to begin your recording - stop with the **yellow** button - or pause with the **blue** button.

Every time you **stop** a recording it ends the track. When you hit **record** again it starts a new track (Audacity is a multi-track recorder). If you wish to stop the current track and then continue recording to the same track use **pause** - clicking pause again to continue.

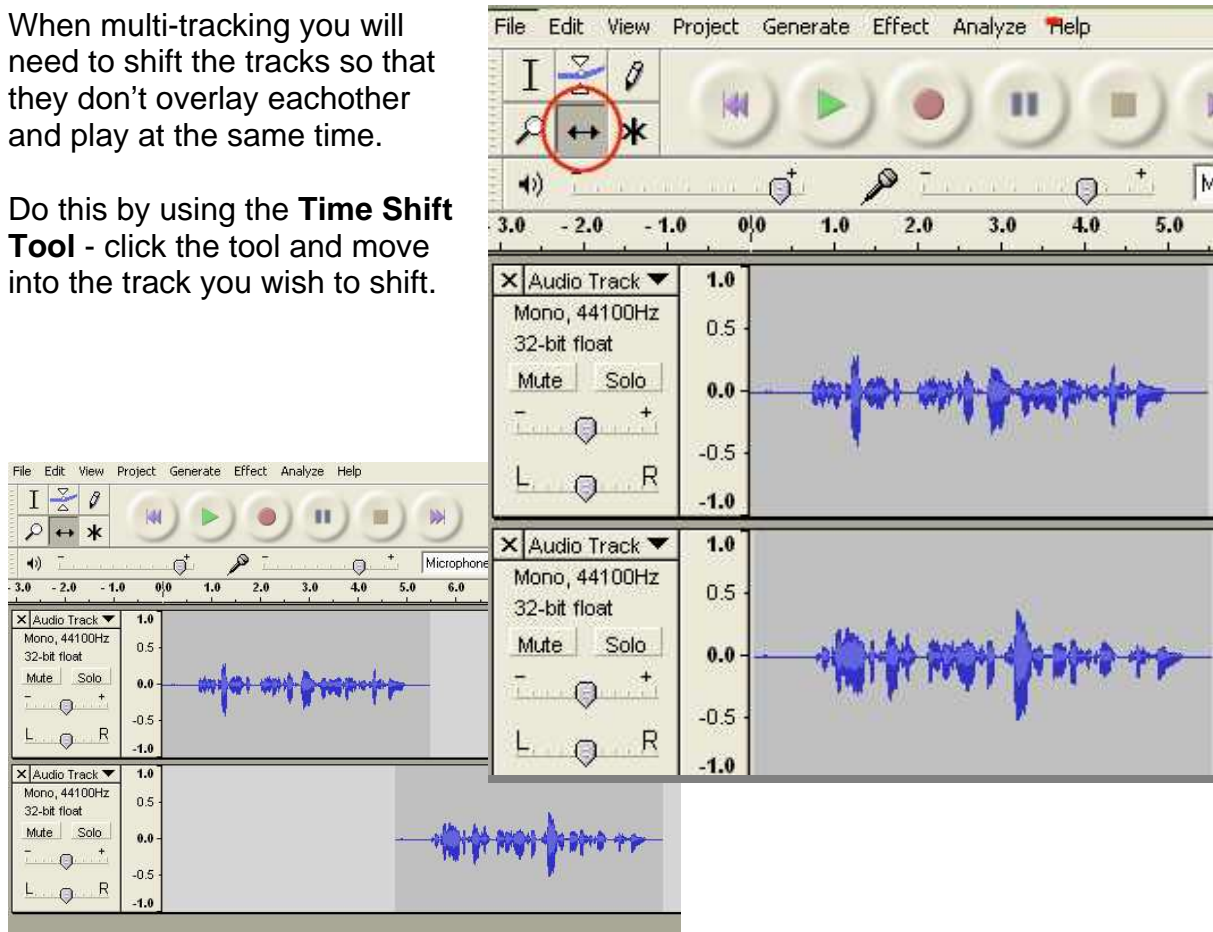
To select a section of audio choose the **Selection Tool**. Hold down the left mouse button and drag across the portion of the track you wish to select. Now that you have selected a portion of audio you can play it (press **Play** and only the selected portion will be played) or delete it (press the **Delete** key on the keyboard).



Use the **Zoom In / Zoom Out** buttons if you need to magnify / reduce the audio graphic / timeline.

When multi-tracking you will need to shift the tracks so that they don't overlay each other and play at the same time.

Do this by using the **Time Shift Tool** - click the tool and move into the track you wish to shift.



Hold down the left mouse button and drag the track to where you want it to be. Use **rewind** to get back to the start and click the **play** button to hear your recording.

To import another sound file (e.g. wav or mp3) select **Project / Import Audio** from the menubar and navigate to the required file. Note that a stereo track will show both left and right channels and that microphone input will show as a mono channel.



If you need to adjust the volume of any track you can use the **gain control** - slide to the right to make louder - to the left to reduce volume. For advanced use you may want to use the **Envelope Tool** which allows you to adjust the volume of a marked section of audio (rather than the whole track). Look at **Envelope Editing** in Audacity's Help file for an explanation of how to use that tool.

When you have finished your recording you should do two things.

Firstly save the project (**File / Save Project**), This will allow you to reopen it later in Audacity and continue to edit / build it.

Secondly create the mp3 (**File / Export As MP3...**)

You can now close Audacity. Your mp3 will now play with any media player simply by double-clicking it.

## Can I use music in my audio file?

You can use it as long as it is royalty and copyright free. This is a murky area, be careful not to break the law. Do NOT use commercially produced music. You may own the CD but that doesn't allow you to include the music in published material.

The best solution is to buy copyright free music from one of the specialist providers. They sell themed CDs which once bought can be used again and again, including on non-commercial websites, requiring no royalty payments or annual licence fees.

Two UK suppliers are listed here - their websites allow you to listen to samples from their catalogues. The costs range from £15 to £35 per CD. More suppliers can be found by searching the net - I include these two simply to give an idea of the marketplace and the material that is available.

[www.akmmusic.co.uk](http://www.akmmusic.co.uk)  
[www.nvmdigital.com/nvmusic/nvm.html](http://www.nvmdigital.com/nvmusic/nvm.html)

Commercial suppliers of copyright free music tend to supply their CDs in both Audio and CD-Rom format. If you buy an audio CD you will need to 'rip' the tracks (convert them to mp3 format) in order to import them to Audacity. This is easily done with Windows Media Player and other free software. If you buy your music in CD-Rom format you will not be able to play it on a Hi-Fi system, but it will already be in the correct format to import to Audacity.

## Links to Audacity Documentation & Tutorials

*Remember that Audacity has a very good built in Help system - you may find that you don't need to look elsewhere.*

This is the official Audacity documentation and tutorials  
<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/help/>

there are many other tutorials which a Google search (Audacity tutorial) will uncover.

Here are a couple of useful video tutorial links

This video clip is a BBC tutorial '60 Second Shakespeare' which demonstrates multi-track editing in Audacity

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/drama/shakespeare/60secondshakespeare/editing\\_videos\\_audio.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/drama/shakespeare/60secondshakespeare/editing_videos_audio.shtml)

You may like to watch Andrew Moore's video podcast tutorial for downloading / configuring and using Audacity. You can find it at

<http://amoore3.podomatic.com/>